The ‘Charmed’ Reboot: Are the New Charmed Ones Strong Enough to Survive?

Posted by Raked

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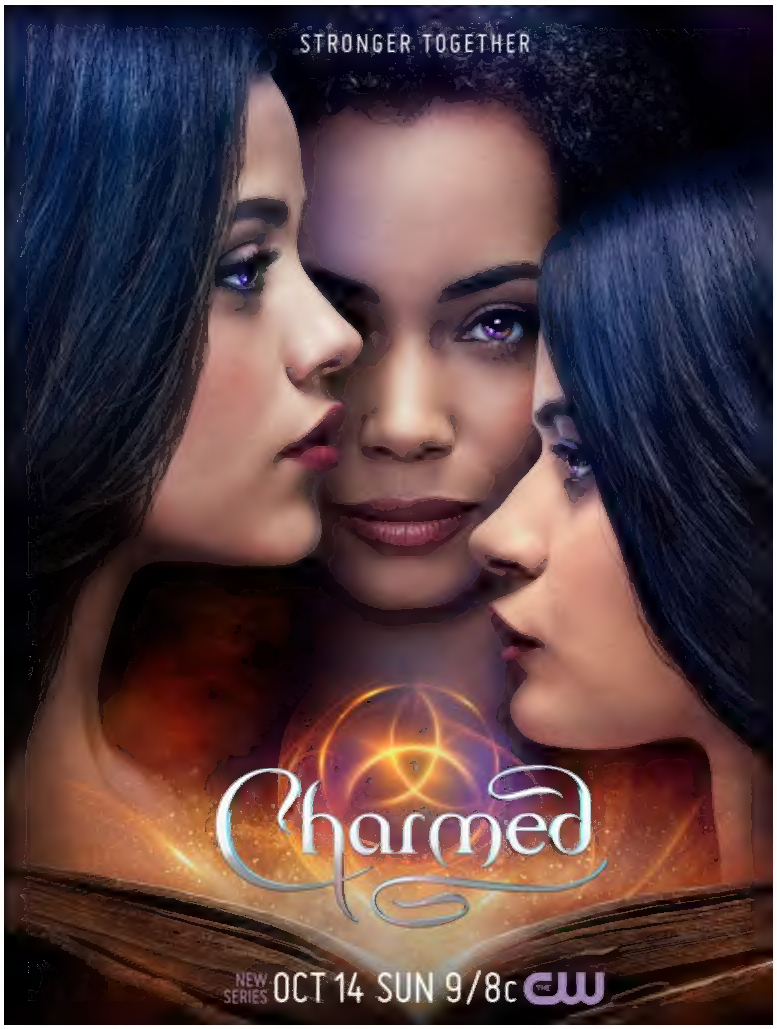

CHARMED: 1.01 "Pilot"

I was a fan of the old *Charmed*. I watched it from the start, stuck through it in the middle years (even years when Cole had long outlived his usefulness), watched the first finale, and then moved on to the next. In fact, *Charmed* was one of those shows I was writing about before I officially started this blog. So when I heard that they were rebooting it with new characters and a semi-new premise, I wasn't too excited. Did we really need another version?

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To be fair, I ask this about a lot of reboots and revivals (and the *Gilmore Girls* revival has taught me to be cautious, even if I am excited), but especially for *Charmed*, I was just left wondering what was left to say, what there was left to do, and why we couldn't just have an original show about witches with new characters and new plot points. I guess, some would argue, the CW tried that with *The Secret Circle*, and we live in a nostalgia world. That doesn't quite convince me, but…

Nonetheless, I wanted to see how this show holds up—not just in comparison to the original, but also on its own merit.

My first thought? The girls are too young. This isn't just because the original had three witches who were in careers (or in the case of Phoebe, between them) and had to balance witchcraft with their real-world responsibilities. Yes, that appealed to me—and it's probably why I felt the most interesting character in last night's premiere was the oldest sister, Macy. But even if you push the original out of view, there's something trivial about hearing someone dealing with demon dogs and her mother's death…all while worrying, "What about rush?" I can't really take her seriously, especially since, really, what was holding her back from accepting her birthright as a witch was…pledging a sorority. (This is not to mean that I'm insulting sororities. But when you look at it in comparison to the dark forces at work, it seems less important.)

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What's more, none of these characters have any personality. Macy is the closest, as she tries to research her past and comes to every witch-related problem with a scientific approach (actually, this

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viewer or makes her all that likable. She does take a hard stand on polarizing issues, but that's about it. There's really nothing more that can be said about these girls.

And that, to me, is the real weakness of the show on its own. Without strong characters, what is there to watch? A demon dog that we didn't even see the girl fight (but apparently green slime was involved), demons that take over bodies a la *Supernatural*, and an ice demon that looks strikingly like the Night King from *Game of Thrones*. The girls seem to have gotten control of their powers rather quickly, and while I do like that they've set up Harry as a questionable character with the cliffhanger, you're left wondering if he and Giles from *Buffy* went to the same Watcher/Whitelighter training facility. I'm just struggling to see the originality of the series, even if you ignore that it's a reboot of another show.

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And let's take a moment to compare it to the original. They've made it different by focusing on a mother's death, rather than a grandmother's. There's still a Book of Shadows (that they really don't use yet). And we have three sisters with the same starting letter: Ms, instead of Ps. But what I miss is the learning curve. Somehow Macy was able to get ahold of her powers rather quickly. So did Mel. Maggie just needs to touch someone to hear their thoughts—a power that I find much less interesting than Phoebe's vague premonitions. But what's more, in the original, their powers stemmed from their emotions. Piper's power (which, truth be told, was always my favorite) started when she'd get scared. But Mel? It's when she's...not mad. But we don't really know what sets it off. Pru was when she was angry, which aligns to some extend with Macy, who seemed to draw power from anger or fear. But then again, she seemed to get a handle on it very quickly, considering it is one of the most active powers of all. I personally liked the link to the emotions in the original since it meant the Charmed Ones not only had to train themselves to learn magic but also to learn a little about themselves. Here, it feels more like convenience.

All to say, I went into the *Charmed* reboot with a relatively open mind, telling myself not to compare it completely to the original. But even then, I'm struggling to find what will capture my attention week to week. If it doesn't focus more on character, I think the Power of Three will be defeated pretty quickly.

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